

1/16/2006

HR 70-14

~~TOP SECRET~~

3705

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

26 October 1978

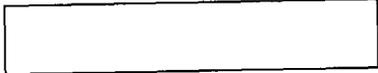
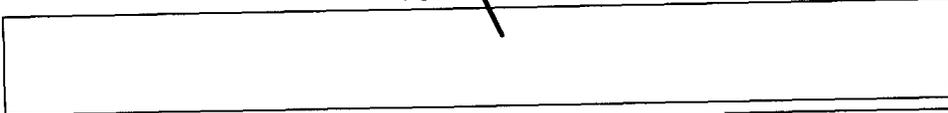
MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence  
FROM : John N. McMahon  
Deputy Director for Operations  
SUBJECT : MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Preparatory  
Fire and Fire Support of an Offensive

1. The enclosed Intelligence Information Special Report is part of a series now in preparation based on the SECRET USSR Ministry of Defense publication Collection of Articles of the Journal 'Military Thought'. This two-part article argues against adoption of the term "fire offensive" to designate nuclear preparation or support for an attack, a term proposed in an earlier article of the series. In addition, the first author attempts to pin down the meaning of massed strike and grouped strike, and the second writer proposes a modification of the definition of H-hour to include a massed nuclear strike when this is to be the first action of an operation. This article appeared in Issue No. 1 (62) for 1962.

2. Because the source of this report is extremely sensitive, this document should be handled on a strict need-to-know basis within recipient agencies. For ease of reference, reports from this publication have been assigned

*JNM*  
John N. McMahon

~~TOP SECRET~~



Distribution:

The Director of Central Intelligence

The Director of Intelligence and Research  
Department of State

The Joint Chiefs of Staff

The Director, Defense Intelligence Agency

The Assistant to the Chief of Staff for Intelligence  
Department of the Army

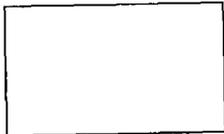
The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence  
U. S. Air Force

Director, National Security Agency

Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

Director of the National Foreign Assessment Center

Director of Strategic Research



[Redacted]



# Intelligence Information Special Report

Page 3 of 12 Pages

COUNTRY USSR

[Redacted]

DATE OF INFO. Early 1962

DATE 26 October 1978

SUBJECT

MILITARY THOUGHT (USSR): Preparatory Fire and Fire Support of an Offensive

SOURCE Documentary

Summary:

The following report is a translation from Russian of an article which appeared in Issue No. 1 (62) for 1962 of the SECRET USSR Ministry of Defense publication Collection of Articles of the Journal 'Military Thought'. The authors of this article are General-Major of Artillery V. Ilyinykh and Lieutenant Colonel N. Osipenko. This article argues against adoption of the term "fire offensive" to designate nuclear preparation or support for an attack, a term proposed in an earlier article of the series. In addition, the first author attempts to pin down the meaning of massed strike and grouped strike, and the second writer proposes a modification of the definition of H-hour to include a massed nuclear strike when this is to be the first action of an operation. End of Summary

[Redacted] Comment:

After 1962 the SECRET version of Military Thought was published three times annually and was distributed down to the level of division commander. It reportedly ceased publication at the end of 1970. [Redacted]

[Redacted] the article on which this one comments has been disseminated as [Redacted] (IRONBARK).

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Preparatory Fire and Fire Support of an Offensive

by

General-Mayor of Artillery V. ILYINYKH  
Lieutenant Colonel N. OSIPENKO

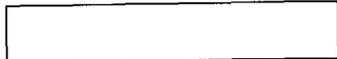
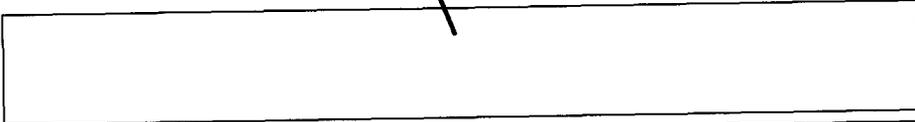
In his article published under the above title,\* Colonel V. PALEYEV poses the question of replacing the terms "preparatory fire" and "fire support" of an offensive with the new term "fire offensive."

The author's assertion that fire is exceptionally important in a modern war is completely correct. The development of missile/nuclear weapons and the employment of missiles and bombs with nuclear and thermonuclear warheads from several kilotons to dozens of megatons converts fire into a factor not only of operational, but also of strategic importance and again raises the question of its role in an operation and a war on the whole.

Since nuclear weapons are the main means of destroying the enemy, the employment of them, naturally, underlies the decision for an operation. Figuratively speaking, the working out of the decision should begin not with arrows on a map specifying the efforts of troops in an offensive, but from the actual determination of enemy targets and troop groupings which must be destroyed with nuclear weapons in order to carry out the task assigned to the front or army. Having made the decision to employ nuclear means, the front commander defines the tasks of the attack groupings of the troops. This is something new that results from the increased role of fire and is not always properly understood.

However, is it necessary in view of this to abandon the terms "preparatory fire" of an offensive and "fire support" of an offensive and in their place introduce the new term "fire offensive"? We think not.

-----  
\* Collection of Articles of the Journal 'Military Thought', No. 5 (60), 1961.



The destruction of specified targets and troops of the enemy with nuclear weapons is not an end in itself, but is carried out in the interests of accomplishing the assigned task on the whole.

In trying to avoid the word "support," we sometimes say that the attacking troops "exploit the results of nuclear strikes" or that "nuclear strikes create conditions for the offensive of infantry and tanks." But, is there any difference in the concepts "support" and "create conditions"?

In our opinion, employing the terms "preparatory fire" and "fire support" does not in any way diminish the role of nuclear weapons and the main means of delivering them to target -- missiles. The author himself makes the reservation that the positions advanced in his article will be applicable for conditions when the front troops have sufficient nuclear means. And where are the criteria for this sufficiency? After all, there will always be more targets to destroy with nuclear strikes than there are capabilities for delivering them.

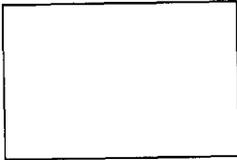
The overall goal of offensive operations, as we know, is the rout and destruction of the main enemy groupings, the most important being nuclear means and aviation, and the seizure of operational-strategic areas and objectives. The task of destruction is fulfilled primarily by nuclear weapons, and the accomplishment of the rout and seizure of territory, by tanks and motorized infantry.

Fire creates conditions, or in other words, ensures the possibility of achieving victory -- and with less bloodshed.

In our military art it is an accepted idea that victory is achieved through the coordinated joint efforts of all the branch arms; however, these efforts are unequal. Due to the strength of their effect on the enemy, nuclear means hold first place; however, they alone could still not accomplish all the tasks of an offensive.

Colonel V. PALEYEV feels that the term "preparatory fire" signifies the creation of conditions for successful actions by a decisive force and that nuclear weapons are such a force, and that, consequently, they prepare these conditions for themselves, as it were.

It would be more correct to state the matter a different way. Preparatory fire creates conditions for the fulfilment of the assigned task on the whole. The concepts "preparatory fire" and "support of an offensive" have not become obsolete, but they have acquired a new quality.



Preparatory fire consists of a nuclear strike and of artillery fire and aviation bombing strikes with the use of conventional and chemical munitions which are coordinated with it by time and place.

Should not a nuclear strike, then, as the main integral part of preparatory fire, be called nuclear preparation? In our opinion, no. The term "nuclear strike" is more applicable to the nature of this terrible weapon.

Nuclear strikes, in turn, are divided into massed, grouped and individual strikes. In regard to the first two, there are different definitions which are somewhat contradictory.

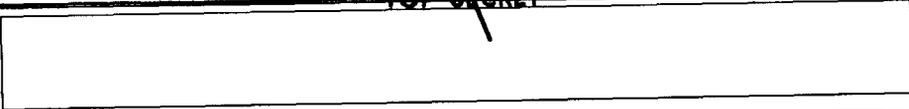
We feel that we should understand a massed strike to be the conduct of fire by several missile brigades against the most important enemy groupings or larger targets, while a grouped strike consists of the simultaneous conduct of fire by a missile battalion or brigade against a single target of great size, with distribution of fire among individual targets of the given larger target.

Thus, if a grouping of enemy forces and means is hit, this signifies that one is delivering a massed nuclear strike; if a large target for which several missiles with nuclear warheads are required is destroyed, one is delivering a grouped strike.

In speaking about the delivery of missile/nuclear strikes during the course of preparatory fire and the support of an offensive, we have in mind missile units and large units of the ground forces. The Strategic Rocket Forces are another matter. Their strength and unlimited range of fire enable them to independently carry out major strategic tasks, creating conditions for attaining the goal of the war. Obviously, massed actions by these troops should be called missile/nuclear operations.

\* \* \*

While we share the opinion of Colonel V. PALEYEV that the terms "preparatory fire" and "fire support" do not correspond to the role of nuclear weapons or to the nature of a modern offensive, we feel at the same time that to replace these terms with "fire offensive" as the author suggests is also unsuitable.



The arguments against the concepts preparatory fire and nuclear preparation and support of an offensive should apply to an equal extent to fire and nuclear counterpreparation, as well as to preparatory fire and nuclear preparation and support of counterthrusts and counterattacks in defense. In our opinion, the inconsistency of the quoted concepts is obvious.

In our opinion, all the terms named can be replaced by one -- "nuclear strikes." This concept was born simultaneously with nuclear weapons and is widely used. It is simple and at the same time universal, sufficiently clear, and applicable to any type of combat actions where nuclear weapons are employed.

Nuclear strikes delivered during the preparation and in the course of an operation (offensive and defensive) -- this is precisely what is understood by nuclear preparation and nuclear support of an offensive (counterthrust, counterattack) and nuclear counterpreparation.

The term "nuclear strike" better than the others expresses the nature of nuclear weapons, as well as the idea of their sudden employment for the purpose of destroying targets or entire groupings of the enemy. This term permits us to reflect the uninterrupted process of the employment of nuclear weapons, the varying density and level of destruction of the enemy (individual, grouped and massed strikes), and the importance of these strikes (strategic, operational, tactical).

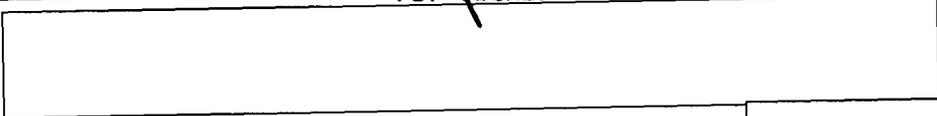
Whereas there are many terms we can eliminate and it will be unnoticed, we certainly cannot do without the term "nuclear strikes."

In spite of the temptation to use the terms "nuclear offensive," "fire offensive," and "fire destruction," they are less suitable.

The term "nuclear offensive" not only does not reflect the actual capabilities and principles of employment of these weapons, but it detracts from them, suggesting ideas of the past. An offensive by the ground forces is no longer as it was in the past, the most decisive type of actions of the armed forces. In this regard, the advantages of massed nuclear strikes of the Strategic Rocket Forces are obvious.

The term "nuclear offensive" replaces the whole with a part, since the concept "offensive" in its overall sense is broader than nuclear offensive or offensive by large units.





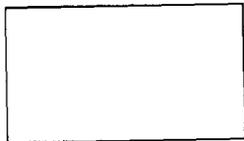
Nuclear weapons do not seize or hold territory. This task, which is part of the overall task in an offensive battle, operation, and war on the whole, is accomplished by combined-arms large units and formations; therefore, nuclear weapons cannot carry out an independent offensive. At one time there was greater validity for the terms "artillery and aviation offensive," since artillery and aviation attacked together with the infantry and tanks. But this term for the same reason proved unsound, because artillery and aviation, like nuclear weapons, were only capable of carrying out an offensive jointly with other troops, not independently.

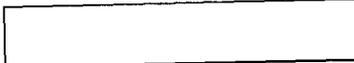
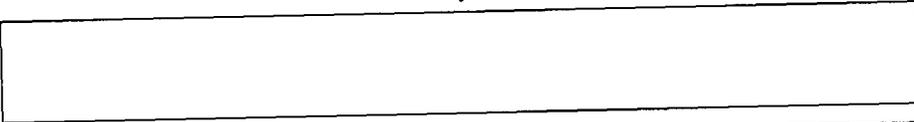
The adoption of the term "nuclear offensive" must logically lead to the introduction of the analogous concept for defense -- "nuclear defense," all the more since nuclear weapons in principle are capable of independently fulfilling the task of disrupting an offensive under preparation. However, in each case, a cult of nuclear weapons is created; these weapons are overestimated, and at the same time the importance of large units and units with conventional weapons is underestimated.

The term "nuclear offensive" will hardly take root even in the future, when tactical nuclear weapons will become a means of infantry subunits and tank crews. Nuclear means only reinforce the fire capabilities and increase the overall capabilities of units and large units; they cannot replace them.

The term "nuclear offensive," which was used in a number of NATO exercises in the autumn of 1960, reflected the striving of political and military leaders of the USA to raise the fighting spirit of their junior partners. In doing this, the ideal was passed off as real. According to the training situation, overall nuclear superiority was established in the theater of military operations. During the offensive of the "enemy" with the employment of nuclear weapons, the withdrawal of NATO troops in the entire Western European Theater of Military Operations lasted seven to ten days. The directors of the exercises felt that during this time, with the help of nuclear strikes, conditions were prepared for going over to a counteroffensive, which, as we know, is the task of operational and strategic defense. The indicated exercises do not provide a basis for using the term "nuclear offensive." In this instance it would be less incorrect to speak about a nuclear defense.

While objecting to the terms "nuclear preparation," "nuclear support," and "nuclear offensive," we feel that there are also no bases for the existence of such collective concepts as "preparatory fire," "fire support," "fire offensive," and "fire destruction." These concepts attempt



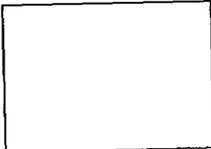


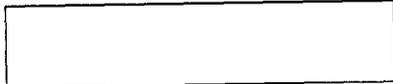
to combine fire means which vary as to their capabilities, purpose, organizational principles, and methods of employment.

The nature of the employment of each of the fire means and its cooperation with other forces and means has its own fundamental characteristics. If nuclear strikes carry out a task in support of the entire operation by destroying the main groupings to the entire depth of the enemy's operational disposition, then artillery and aviation even under present-day conditions have the goal during the period preceding the going over of the troops to the offensive of providing favorable conditions for the attack, and during the conduct of the offensive of cooperating with the troops in overcoming the enemy opposition while the destruction of his groupings subjected to nuclear strikes is being completed. Therefore, the terms "artillery preparation (support)" and "aviation preparation (support)" of an offensive fully retain their importance.

Do nuclear weapons participate in supporting the actions of tanks and motorized infantry, do nuclear strikes prepare conditions for a successful attack, and do they support the attack of large units and units in the course of an operation? Unquestionably, they do. Nuclear weapons carry out these tasks in a much greater volume and with incomparably better results than artillery and aviation did in the past. In this regard, the importance of nuclear strikes is especially great when they are delivered in the tactical zone for the purpose of creating breaches in the enemy's prepared defense, and when they are delivered in the course of an attack against enemy targets (means of nuclear attack, centers of defense, advancing reserves, etc.) which directly obstruct the advance of the troops. Even those nuclear strikes which are delivered against the deep reserves of the enemy at the beginning of and in the course of an operation support the actions of the troops.

However, the tasks of protecting and supporting the troops are carried out by nuclear weapons, in our opinion, incidentally to the achievement of the main goal of their employment -- the destruction of the most important enemy targets and groupings. It is precisely by the destruction and reliable neutralization of the main enemy groupings that conditions are created for the rapid completion of their rout by large units. If an attacking division has the task of seizing the defense area of the enemy, then the main condition for fulfilling this is to destroy the enemy in his strongpoints, primarily with nuclear strikes. In the past the destruction of the enemy was carried out methodically by units of the division itself with the fire cooperation of artillery and aviation. This example clearly shows the strength of nuclear strikes and their role in combat actions.





If nuclear strikes carry out the main tasks in an offensive operation, then its beginning ('H') must be considered the moment of the initial massed nuclear strike against the enemy's defense. This fully corresponds to the role of nuclear weapons, the sequence of the commitment of forces and means to action, and the principles of their cooperation in a battle or operation, especially in an operation during the initial period of a war, when the massed employment of nuclear weapons is most characteristic.

The former 'H', based on a tactical moment (the attack on the forward edge of defense of the enemy), loses its meaning both for initial and for subsequent operations when nuclear weapons are employed.

The massed employment of nuclear weapons by effecting ground bursts can take place several hours and even a full day prior to the beginning of the attack of the troops. Obviously, in this situation, the offensive operation of the side preempting the other in the delivery of nuclear strikes and the defensive operation of the opposing side will begin with the moment of the initial nuclear bursts.

When aviation and artillery strikes with conventional means precede the employment of nuclear weapons, the proposed interpretation of the beginning of the offensive will not change, since the nature of employment of these means in modern conditions has become increasingly supportive in regard to tanks and infantry and supplementary in regard to nuclear weapons.

The beginning of a meeting engagement (battle) up till the present has been considered to be the moment of the encounter of the vanguard security units (subunits) of the sides, regardless of the fact that a modern meeting battle is characterized by the striving of the belligerents to inflict decisive destruction on the enemy with strikes of nuclear weapons even before the encounter of the combined-arms large units. When making the decision for a meeting engagement, the commander must indicate the time and lines for his troops and the probable lines for the enemy's troops, which it is advisable to reach in order to deliver preemptive nuclear strikes with the greatest destructive effect and the best conditions for exploiting their results by the troops. It is obvious that the nuclear strikes of the side which has preempted the enemy in delivering them also should signify the beginning of the meeting engagement, while the subsequent maneuvering in order to bring about the encounter of troops will be the development of this engagement.



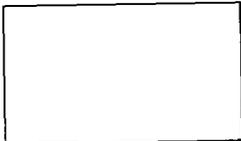


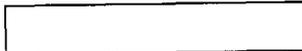
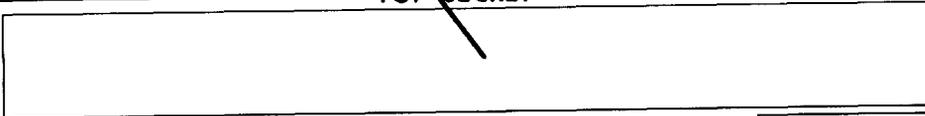
The existing meaning of "H" is applicable only for an offensive operation of the pre-nuclear period and does not correspond in time with the beginning of a defensive operation. The actions of the defending troops are planned and actually begun with the hitting of the enemy with all types of fire already in front of the forward edge in order to disrupt or weaken his attack. Therefore, with the former meaning of "H", a defensive operation was actually begun earlier than the attack by the advancing troops.

The experience of exercises shows that now both for the attacking troops and for the defending troops what is most important in organizing combat actions is specifying the time of their own nuclear strike and establishing the time of the possible nuclear strike of the enemy. After massed nuclear strikes of the attacker, the main forces of the defense are committed to action in accordance with the plan independently of whether the attack of tanks and infantry follows immediately after the nuclear strikes or several hours later. Therefore, defining the beginning of operations as the moment of the massed nuclear strike of the attacker is equally suitable for both sides.

The standard interpretation and precise definition of the concept "H" ("D" for an operation) has become a matter of greater importance than it would seem at first glance. For example, when planning operations, part of the operational staffs actually carry out calculations from the moment the nuclear strike is delivered, while another part of the staffs and tactical levels of control carry out calculations from the moment of the attack. A different understanding of the beginning of an operation and, resulting from this, a diversity in planning the actions of the troops under conditions where nuclear weapons are employed, may lead to undesirable consequences in organizing and implementing cooperation of forces and means.

In an operational-strategic command-staff exercise held in 1960, the command of "South's" Don Front needed a special directive to establish the uniform times and the nature of the actions of the front troops for the conduct of the offensive operation. The first point of this directive specified: "H" is the launch of missiles by all missile units and subunits participating in the initial massed nuclear strike, and for the combined-arms large units and units -- the beginning of the movement of reconnaissance and forward detachments from the waiting areas, eight to twelve kilometers from the "state border."





The proposed definition of the beginning of an operation permits nuclear strikes to be included in the operation, while the former meaning of 'H' will classify these strikes as "nuclear preparation."

From what has been stated it is obvious that now there is a process of establishing new operational-tactical concepts. The new nature of events requires a terminology which corresponds to it, and which is capable of freeing it from the prison of ideas of the past. The latter is a necessary prerequisite for establishing new principles of operational art and tactics.

